MARVEL®

©1983 MARVEL COMICS GROUP

TM

60¢
U.K. 25p
CAN. 75c

14
APR

THE NEW MUTANTS™

MANDRAKE

STAN LEE *PRESENTOR*

CHRIS CLAREMONT *writer*

SAL BUSCEMA *penciler*

TOM MANDRAKE *finisher*

GLYNIS WEIN *colorist*

TOM ORZECHOWSKI *letterer*

LOUISE JONES *editor*

JIM SHOOTER *boss*

NEW MUTANTS *STARS*

CREATED BY CHRIS CLAREMONT & BOB McLEOD

DO YOU BELIEVE IN-- MAGIK?

ONCE UPON A TIME, A DEMON SAID TO A VERY LITTLE GIRL: "WHEN YOU ARE GROWN INTO A WOMAN AND HAVE LEARNED IN FULL MEASURE THE ARTS ARCANE, WHEN AT LAST THE FIVE ***BLOODSTONES*** ARE IN THEIR PROPER PLACES WITHIN THIS MEDALLION...

"...THEN, ***ILLYANA RASPUTIN,*** YOU WILL ASCEND TO THE MOST ***GLORIOUS*** OF DESTINIES."

HIS NAME WAS BELASCO AND WHAT HE MEANT WAS THAT I'D BECOME THE MYSTIC, LIVING GATE-WAY THROUGH WHICH HIS DREAD MASTERS, THE DARK ONES, WOULD EMERGE TO LAY WASTE TO THE EARTH AND CONQUER OUR UNIVERSE.

I THOUGHT IT WAS WONDERFUL.

THE NEW MUTANTS ™ Vol. 1, No. 14, April, 1984. Published by MARVEL COMICS GROUP, James E. Galton, President. Stan Lee, Publisher. Michael Hobson, Vice-President, Publishing. Milton Schiffman, Vice-President, Production. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 387 PARK AVENUE SOUTH, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016. Published monthly. Copyright © 1983 by Marvel Comics Group, a division of Cadence Industries Corporation. All rights reserved. Price 60¢ per copy in the U.S. and 75¢ in Canada. Subscription rate $7.20 for 12 issues. Canada and Foreign, $9.20. Printed in the U.S.A. No similarity between any of the names, characters, persons, and/or institutions in this magazine with those of any living or dead person or institution is intended, and any such similarity which may exist is purely coincidental. This periodical may not be sold except by authorized dealers and is sold subject to the conditions that it shall not be sold or distributed with any part of its cover or markings removed, nor in a mutilated condition. THE NEW MUTANTS (including all prominent characters featured in the issue), and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are trademarks of the MARVEL COMICS GROUP. Postmaster: Send address changes to Subscription Dept., Marvel Comics Group, 387 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10016. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

I WAS YOUNGER THEN. SEVEN. A BABY.

TODAY, BARELY A YEAR LATER, I'M FIFTEEN.

I'M A MUTANT, LIKE MY OLDER BROTHER PETER. HE CAME TO PROFESSOR XAVIER'S SCHOOL TO LEARN THE PROPER USE OF HIS FANTASTIC POWERS, AND ALSO TO JOIN THE PROFESSOR'S GROUP OF MUTANT SUPER-HEROES, THE X-MEN.

HALF MY LIFE WAS SPENT IN LIMBO, BELASCO'S MAGICKAL DOMAIN, WHERE THE NORMAL RULES OF TIME DON'T APPLY. FOR ME, THERE, YEARS PASSED-- WHILE ON EARTH, ONLY SECONDS. I SAW FRIENDS DIE -- TWO OF THEM BY MY OWN HAND. I SURVIVED, AND ESCAPED. SOMETIMES, I WISH I HADN'T. *

NOW THAT MY OWN SPECIAL ABILITIES HAVE APPEARED, I CAN FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS.

*FOR DETAILS, SEE THE MAGIK MINI-SERIES -- L.

OR I CAN RETURN HOME, TO RUSSIA, TO MY PARENTS. BUT HOWEVER WILL I EXPLAIN MY TRANSFORMATION FROM CHILD TO YOUNG ADULT?

HOW DO I TELL THEM THEIR DARLING DAUGHTER HAS BECOME...

... A DEMON SORCERESS?!!

I'D GIVE MY SOUL TO BE WHERE I WAS A YEAR AGO...

...IF I HAD A SOUL LEFT TO GIVE.

BELASCO NEEDS MY MEDALLION TO OPEN THE DIMENSIONAL GATE. IDEALLY, HE NEEDS MY LIFE-ESSENCE AS WELL TO CONJURE THE FINAL BLOOD-STONES.

SOONER OR LATER, HE'LL COME FOR THEM. AND, WITH LUCK, ONE OF US WILL DIE.

IF IT'S HIM, THE WORLD WILL BE SAVED. IF IT'S ME...

OR IS IT THE OTHER WAY 'ROUND?

BY THE TIME I KNOW FOR CERTAIN, IT'LL BE TOO LATE.

Hunh?!

IT'S SNOWING!

BELOW THE RIDGE, EXCITED CRIES AND WHOOPS FOR JOY ECHO ACROSS THE LAWN AS THE PROFESSOR'S NOVICE STUDENTS, HIS NEW MUTANTS, ARE RELEASED FROM CLASS A LITTLE EARLY.

PROFESSOR XAVIER DOES HAVE A HEART. HE JUST PREFERS TO KEEP IT HIDDEN.

THE YOUNGEST OF THE TEAM IS RAHNE SINCLAIR.

SHE'S A WEREWOLF.

ROBERTO DaCOSTA IS FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WORLD FROM RAHNE'S SCOTS BIRTHPLACE -- BRAZIL.

HE ABSORBS THE POWER FROM THE SUN...

... AND USES IT TO TRANSFORM HIMSELF INTO A BEING OF INCREDIBLE STRENGTH -- WHEN HE GETS STRONGER, HE MIGHT WELL BE THE EQUAL OF PETER.

HE'S VERY CUTE. HE KNOWS IT, TOO.

SAM GUTHRIE'S THE OLDEST. HE BLASTS THROUGH THE AIR LIKE A ROCKET...

... AND TENDS TO DEMOLISH ANYTHING HE RUNS INTO.

AMARA'S MY AGE, FROM A FABULOUS LOST CITY ABOVE THE HEADWATERS OF THE AMAZON RIVER. SHE'S THE NEWEST ARRIVAL.

I UNDERSTAND HOW SHE FEELS. I WAS AS LOST AFTER MY RETURN FROM LIMBO -- TRYING MY BEST TO ADJUST TO A WORLD I BARELY REMEMBERED AND A REALITY I FOUND TOTALLY ALIEN

IT WAS THE LITTLE THINGS THAT HURT MOST-- REALIZING IN MY ROOM THAT ALL MY CLOTHES WERE TOO SMALL.

Uh-oh! I BET THIS SNOW REMINDS AMARA OF HER MOUNTAIN HOME, THE WAY IT REMINDS ME OF MINE. SHE PROBABLY MISSES IT JUST AS MUCH, TOO.

MAYBE I CAN CHEER HER UP.

LESSEE -- I'LL TOUCH HER MIND VERY GENTLY WITH MINE. I DON'T WANT TO BOTCH THINGS, THE WAY I DID IN RIO, BY LATCHING ONTO THE IMAGE OF SOMETHING AWFUL.

I'M AFTER A SPECIFIC KIND OF IMAGE, THAT'LL MAKE AMARA FEEL GOOD, AND WHEN I FIND IT...

... I'LL CREATE A SPIRIT-FORM OF IT THAT SHE CAN SEE!

DANI???

IS THIS YOUR DOING?! Oh, IF ONLY YOU KNEW WHAT HAPPENED UNDER THIS TREE!

OKAY, WHAT?

ASK ROBERTO.

I THINK I'LL KILL HIM FIRST.

THEY LAUGH SO EASILY...

...WHILE I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW TO CRY.

I WANT TO PLAY...

...BUT I DON'T KNOW HOW TO ASK. THE ONLY PERSON IN THE MANSION I'M TRULY COMFORTABLE WITH -- AROUND WHOM I CAN RELAX AND BE MYSELF -- IS MY BEST FRIEND AND ROOMMATE, *KITTY PRYDE*.

SHE'S AWAY WITH THE X-MEN, ON A MISSION.

ILLYANA'S MIND IS CLOSED TO ME.

TRY AS I MIGHT, I CANNOT PENETRATE THE BARRIERS SHE PLACES AROUND HER THOUGHTS. WHAT IS SHE SO AFRAID I'LL FIND?

SHE'S NEVER TOLD US PRECISELY WHAT HAPPENED TO HER IN LIMBO, COULD IT HAVE BEEN SO HORRIBLE?

IS SHE TRYING TO PROTECT HERSELF-- OR US?

THERE'S THE PROFESSOR.
MAN LOOKS LIKE GRIM DEATH. AH WONDER WHAT'S WRONG?
HE'S BEEN THAT WAY FOR THE PAST WEEK OR SO.

I MAY KNOW PART OF THE REASON. HIS BELOVED, *PRINCESS LILANDRA*, HAD TO RETURN TO HER OWN COUNTRY, TO DO BATTLE WITH HER USURPER SISTER. PROFESSOR XAVIER MISSES HER.
HE FEARS HE MAY NEVER SEE HER AGAIN.

THE PROFESSOR-- *OUR* PROFESSOR-- HAS A *SWEETHEART?!?!?*
WILL WONDERS NEVER CEASE!

GIVE IT A REST, SHORTY!
AH DECLARE, THE BOY HASN'T GOT A RESPECTFUL BONE IN HIS BODY.

AH WISH THERE WAS SOMETHIN' WE COULD DO, TO MAKE THE PROF FEEL BETTER.
MAYBE THERE IS! WHY DON'T WE THROW HIM A SURPRISE PARTY?! WE COULD GET ALL THE FIXINGS WHEN WE'RE IN TOWN FOR DANCE CLASS AND HAVE EVERYTHING READY BY TONIGHT! WHADDYA SAY, GUYS?!
SOUNDS GREAT T' ME.

WE'D BETTER BE ON OUR WAY, THEN. IT WON'T BE MUCH OF A SURPRISE IF THE PROFESSOR READS IT IN OUR MINDS.
HEY, ILLYANA. WE'RE GONNA GIVE THE PROF A PARTY! YOU WANT IN?
YOU'RE ONLY WEARING A SWEATER! HERE, TAKE MY JACKET. YOU MUST BE FREEZING!
I'M FINE ROBERTO, REALLY.
COLD DOESN'T BOTHER ME.

"YOUR IDEA SOUNDS LIKE JUST WHAT THE PROFESSOR NEEDS, I'LL BE GLAD TO HELP."
THERE'S THE GIRL.
TOO MANY PEOPLE ABOUT, S'YM WILL BIDE HIS TIME.
HE'S COME A LONG WAY FOR YOU, ILLYANA. HE DOESN'T MIND WAITING A LITTLE LONGER.

IN SALEM CENTER, THE OTHERS QUICKLY TELL OUR DANCE TEACHER, STEVIE HUNTER, WHAT'S PLANNED AND ASK FOR HER HELP...

Y'SEE, WITH YOUR CAR WE COULD DO A LOT MORE, A LOT FASTER...

SAY NO MORE, DANI--

--COUNT ME IN.

GOOD THING YOU CHOSE THIS WEEK FOR YOUR PARTY, I'LL BE AWAY ON VACATION STARTING THURSDAY.

HI, DOUG!

SORRY I MISSED CLASS, STEVIE. YOU SEEN KITTY ANY-WHERE?

'FRAID NOT. CAN I GIVE HER A MESSAGE?

ONLY THAT I NEED TO TALK TO HER.

IT'S REAL IMPORTANT. SEEYA!

I WONDER WHAT *DOUG RAMSEY* WANTED?

WHO CARES, RAHNE? IT'S NO CONCERN OF OURS.

OCH, 'BERTO-- HOWEVER WILL WE ALL FIT INTO STEVIE'S WEE CAR?

VERY CARE-FULLY, KIDDO.

WITH A GREAT MANY GIGGLES--

--PLUS AN OCCASIONAL YELP AS THE SAAB BOUNCES OVER A POTHOLE--

--WE MAKE OUR WAY TO NEARBY SALEM MALL.

EVIDENTLY, MY COMPANIONS HAVE BEEN HERE BEFORE.

THEY'RE *STILL* REBUILDIN'?! WHEN WE FOUGHT THE *SENTINELS*, I DIDN'T FIGURE WE DID SO MUCH DAMAGE.*

LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE, SAM. WE HAVEN'T SEEN THOSE MUTANT-HUNTING ROBOTS SINCE.

I WONDER WHY?

*NM #2 -- L.

I WISH THE OTHERS' MOOD WAS INFECTIOUS -- BUT MY MIND IS TOO FULL OF MEMORIES OF WHAT WAS, FEARS OF WHAT MAY YET BE. I SHOULDN'T HAVE COME.

I JUST REALIZED, ISN'T TODAY YOUR BIRTHDAY, ILLYANA?

YES.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL US SOONER?! IF NOT FOR THIS CRAZY PARTY, YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HAD ANY CELEBRATION AT ALL!

I DON'T MIND.

THAT'S A PRETTY HEAVY LOAD, SAM.

NO PROBLEM, MISS HUNTER. AH CAN HANDLE IT FINE -- AN' MORE BESIDES.

HEY, RAHNE, WATCH IT?! WHAT'RE YOU DOIN', GIRL?!

OWW!!

SAM GUTHRIE, IF YOU WERE CARRYIN' LESS-- AN' NOT TRYIN' SO HARD TO SHOW OFF -- YOU'D BE ABLE T' SEE WHERE YOU WERE GOIN'!

Ah... I'M SORRY, RAHNE. YOU OKAY?

DOES IT MATTER?

RAHNEY! LONG TIME, NO SEE -- HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

H'LO, DIANA, IT'S BEEN AGES! YOU LOOK VERRA WELL.

NO COMPLAINTS. WHO'S THE NEW FACE?

A CLASS-MATE.

AMARA, THESE ARE DIANA AND TONY, FRIENDS OF OURS FROM HERE IN TOWN.

WHERE YOU FROM, AMY?

ROME.

NO FOOLIN'? I'VE NEVER BEEN TO THAT PART OF NEW YORK, BUT I HEAR IT'S NICE.

THE MANSION... FROM THE X-MEN'S ACCOUNT, I BELIEVE ILLYANA'S ABDUCTOR TO BE AN INFAMOUS 13th CENTURY DEMONOLOGIST-- BUT MY LIBRARY CONTAINS ONLY VEILED REFERENCES TO BELASCO AND PRECIOUS FEW OF THESE.

MY FRIEND, STEPHEN STRANGE, IS A MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS.

PERHAPS HE--OR NIGHTCRAWLER'S FOSTER MOTHER, THE GYPSY SORCERESS MARGALI SZARDOS-- CAN FILL IN SOME OF THE GAPS -- eh ???

I THOUGHT I SENSED ANOTHER PRESENCE -- BUT THE CONTACT WAS SO FLEETING AND FAINT, IT COULD HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION.

IT FELT DIFFERENT FROM THE EXTRA-TERRES-TRIAL SCANNING WAVES THAT SO DEVASTA-TED ME BEFORE.

NONE OF THE ALARMS HAVE SOUNDED.

G'DAY, PROF!

WHAT THE DEVIL--!?!

YOU GOT IT. NAME'S S'YM. HERE ON BUSINESS.

S'YM WAS THE DEMON THE X-MEN FOUGHT IN BELASCO'S LIMBO-- A CREATURE OF UN-BELIEVABLE STRENGTH AND POWERS.

I'M NO MATCH FOR HIM PHYSICALLY.

I'LL TRY TO IMMOBILIZE HIM WITH A MINDBLAST.

UNNGNH!

S'YM KILLED A FAIR NUMBER OF YOUR PRECIOUS MUTANTS IN HIS TIME, PROF.

HE WOULDN'T MIND AT ALL ADDING YOU TO THE LIST.

WE TRY TELEPHONING FROM THE MALL TO SEE IF THE COAST IS CLEAR AT HOME, BUT THERE'S NO REPLY-- EVEN FROM THE ANSWERING MACHINE.

PLACE LOOKS QUIET ENOUGH--HE COULD BE TAKING A NAP AND JUST FORGOT TO FLICK THE "ON" SWITCH.

THE PROFESSOR?! SLEEPIN' IN THE AFTER-NOON AN' FORGETTIN' TO DO *ANYTHING*?! C'MON, DANI-- YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING?!

WE CAN'T SIMPLY BARGE IN, GUYS. WE'RE TAKING A BIG ENOUGH RISK COMING THIS CLOSE.

AFTER ALL OUR WORK, IT'D BE A SHAME TO BLOW OUR SURPRISE AT THIS STAGE OF THE GAME.

HE CAN'T READ *MY* MIND, DANI. I'LL SCOUT THE GROUNDS. IF HE'S HERE, WE CAN HIDE OUR SUPPLIES IN THE CARRIAGE HOUSE AND MAKE OURSELVES SCARCE...

...UNTIL STEVIE LURES HIM INTO TOWN FOR THE HOUR OR SO WE'LL NEED TO GET READY! THAT'S GREAT, ILLYANA!

SHE'S VERY STRANGE, ROBERTO. IS SHE A MUTANT, LIKE YOU?

WE DON'T KNOW. HER BROTHER IS.

SHE REMINDS ME OF *SELENE*...

...THE DEMON MUTANT WHO PREYED ON MY PEOPLE IN *NOVA ROMA*-- WHO SLEW MY MOTHER AND TRIED TO STEAL DANI'S SOUL. *

ILLYANA ISN'T LIKE THAT, AMARA.

CAN YOU BE CERTAIN, STEVIE? SOMETIMES, EVEN THE X-MEN SEEM AFRAID OF HER.

* SEE NM #3 9-11 --L

THEY SPEAK SOFTLY, BUT I HEAR EVERY WORD. I WANT TO HURL THEIR SUSPICIONS BACK IN THEIR FACES-- WHO ARE THEY TO JUDGE ME, HOW DARE THEY?!

BUT MY ANGER CANNOT HIDE THE ESSENTIAL TRUTH OF AMARA'S WORDS--

--I HAVE MORE, MUCH MORE, IN COMMON WITH SELENE THAN WITH ANY OF THE NEW MUTANTS.

EVERY SO OFTEN, I WONDER IF I SHOULD LEAVE THE PROFESSOR AND THE X-MEN, BEFORE THE EVIL BELASCO PLANTED WITHIN ME...

...CORRUPTS AND DESTROYS THOSE I LOVE AS WELL.

PROFESSOR XAVIER?

OF THEM ALL, ONLY KITTY PRYDE...

...ACCEPTS ME, PURELY AND SIMPLY, AS A FRIEND. WITHOUT QUESTION OR RESERVATION.

IS SHE AWARE OF HOW PRECIOUS A GIFT THAT IS, OF HOW MUCH I VALUE IT?

I COULD LAY THE WORLD AT HER FEET, AND IT WOULDN'T BEGIN TO REPAY HER.

I'VE BEEN THINKING TOO MUCH OF MYSELF-- I SHOULD HAVE NOTICED SOONER, THE HOUSE IS TOO QUIET. SOMETHING FEELS... WRONG.

WE WERE IN SUCH A HAPPY MOOD AS WE DROVE IN, NONE OF US STOPPED TO REALIZE THAT THE PROFESSOR'S SILENCE MIGHT BE DUE TO AN ATTACK. I'D BETTER GET THE OTHERS, WE'LL MAKE A PROPER SEARCH...

S'YM GREETS YOU, DARKCHILD...

...IN THE NAME OF YOUR SOVEREIGN LORD. BELASCO MISSES YOU. HE SENT S'YM TO BRING YOU TO HIM.

NO!!

I KNOW SUCH SPELLS AS WOULD SHRIVEL S'YM TO DUST...

...BUT AT HIS TOUCH, ALL KNOWLEDGE, ALL COURAGE, FLEE. I CAN THINK OF NOTHING, SAVE HOW WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, AND WAS BAD...

...BELASCO SENT S'YM TO PUNISH ME.

MY MAGIC FAILS ME.

MY MUTANT POWERS DON'T.

A "LIGHT CIRCLE" APPEARS BENEATH STEVIE'S CAR, HURTLING IT AND THE NEW MUTANTS...

...INTO LIMBO! *

STEVIE, WHAT HAPPENED TO US?! WHERE ARE WE?!

DANI, SAM-- THAT'S *ILLYANA!*

IT CAN'T BE, BOBBY-- SHE'S TOO YOUNG!

* SEE MAGIK #3--LOUISE.

--AND THEN I BRING THEM BACK, ONLY INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM.

S'YM'S CRUSHING THE AIR FROM MY LUNGS-- HE'S ALWAYS ENJOYED HURTING ME. WITH MY LAST SCRAP OF AWARENESS, I SEE THE MUTANTS ARRIVE, AND PRAY I HAVEN'T SUMMONED THEM TO THEIR DOOM.

JOVE HAVE MERCY!

WHO THE HECK IS *THAT?!!*

WHO CARES?! IT'S GOT ILLYANA!

SHE'S ALL S'YM CAME FOR. FOR YOUR OWN HEALTH, S'YM SUGGESTS YOU DON'T GET INVOLVED.

WE DON'T TAKE KINDLY TO MONSTERS KIDNAPPIN' OUR PALS, FELLA!

LORD KNOWS WHAT THIS CHARACTER'S ALREADY DONE TO THE PROFESSOR.

AH BETTER HIT HIM WITH EVERYTHING AH'VE GOT!

IS S'YM MEANT TO BE IMPRESSED, BOY?

THAT IMPACT COULD HAVE TOPPLED A SKYSCRAPER -- BUT IT DIDN'T EVEN STAGGER S'YM!

I'VE GOT TO FLATTEN HIM.

NONE OF THE GIRLS CAN HOPE TO MATCH OUR RAW POWER. IF SAM AND I CAN'T BEAT HIM...

... THIS FIGHT'S AS GOOD AS OVER.

YOU CHILDREN ARE BEGINNING TO ANNOY S'YM. KEEP IT UP...

...AND YOU'LL MAKE HIM MAD!

MY TEETH'LL BE OF LITTLE USE, I FEAR, WHERE SAM AN' BERTO'S STRENGTH HA' FAILED--

--BUT I MUST AT LEAST...

RAHNE--WAIT! DON'T!!

SHOULD HAVE LISTENED, WOLFLING. SWEET DREAMS!

WE'RE A *TEAM*, BLAST IT!

ATTACKING SOLO IS SUICIDE, OUR ONLY HOPE IS TO WORK TOGETHER!

AMARA, WAIT FOR MY CUE!

"I'LL CREATE A SPIRIT-FORM OF WHATEVER THAT UGLY BRUTE IS MOST SCARED OF-- PLEASE HEAVEN, LET THERE BE *SOMETHING* HE'S SCARED OF--

"--THEN, WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED, YOU NAIL HIM!"

IT'S *WORKING!*

BY MY ANCESTORS--

--WHAT HAVE I DONE?!?

YOU DISAPPOINT ME, S'YM. CAN I NO LONGER DEPEND ON YOU, FOR EVEN THE MOST TRIVIAL OF ERRANDS?

BELASCO!

HAVE MERCY, LORD! S'YM IS OBEDIENT TO YOUR WILL. S'YM IS LOYAL!

HOW SAD, FOR THAT MEANS YOU ARE TRULY DOOMED.

AFTER ALL, IF YOU SERVE THE DARKLORD...

...YOU MUST THEREFORE BE THE SWORN ENEMY OF HIS DARKCHILD.

EITHER WAY MEANS A BETRAYAL, SWEET S'YM.

EITHER BETRAYAL WILL COST YOU MOST DEAR.

ILLYANA! THAT MONSTER DROPPED HER!

COVER ME, WHILE I GET HER TO SAFETY. THEN, YOU GIRLS HIGH-TAIL IT OUT OF HERE YOURSELVES!

NO HEROICS, UNDERSTAND?! S'YM IS *WAY* OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE!

WHAT WE SAW WASN'T REAL -- MERELY DANI'S PSYCHIC EXTERNALIZATIONS OF S'YM'S DEEPEST TERRORS -- BUT ONE OF THE FIGURES WAS A MIX OF BELASCO AND *ILLYANA*!

STAND BACK, DANI! I'LL CREATE A VOLCANO--

-- AND BURY THE DEMON IN MOLTEN LAVA!

HOW IS THAT, DANI? I COOLED THE MAGMA AS SOON AS IT STRUCK -- S'YM IS ENCASED IN SOLID ROCK.

WHAT A MESS!

OUR TEAMWORK SUCCEEDED, AS YOU SAID...

... WHERE THE BOYS, FIGHTING ALONE, DID NOT!

TAP TAP TAP

gasp!!!

I HEARD A SCREAM. I GUESS THAT MEANS THE WORST.

THE TRANSIT TUNNEL'S AT THE END OF THIS CORRIDOR. ITS MAGNA-CARS'LL GET US TO THE HANGER COMPLEX-- OVER A MILE FROM HERE--IN NO TIME.

FROM THERE, I CAN SEND AN EMERGENCY SIGNAL TO THE X-MEN-- THE *ELEVATOR!?!*

S'YM'S PULLING IT UP!

STILL ROOM TO JUMP! I'LL HAVE TO TAKE THE BRUNT OF THE FALL--

--AND PRAY MY KNEE HOLDS!

AIIUNNHHH!

I'LL HAVE SOME LOVELY BRUISES TOMORROW--ASSUMING I LIVE THAT LONG -- BUT NOTHING FEELS BROKEN.

THAT CRASH-- S'YM MUST'VE DROPPED DOWN ONTO THE ELEVATOR! ITS ROOF WON'T HOLD HIM LONG--

--WE'VE GOT TO *MOVE!*

I WISH YOU WERE AWAKE, ILLYANA. YOU COULD AT LEAST RUN.

THE BEST I CAN DO IS HOBBLE.

Oh, NO!!
NOT NOW-- PLEASE DON'T FAIL ME NOW!
THE PAIN'S AS BAD AS EVER-- WRENCHING MY LEG WHEN I LANDED DIDN'T HELP ANY. MY KNEE WON'T LOCK INTO PLACE, IT'S COMPLETELY USELESS!
I CAN'T WALK-- I'M BARELY ABLE TO CRAWL!

I'M SORRY, ILLYANA. I DID MY BEST.
S'YM IS OUT OF PATIENCE.
S'YM'S SOLE INTEREST WAS THE DARKCHILD, BUT YOU HAD TO MAKE THINGS DIFFICULT.

VERY WELL, THEN. S'YM WILL REPAY YOU IN KIND. THE X-MEN WILL RETURN HOME TO BE WELCOMED BY YOUR BLEACHED BONES.

DON'T MAKE PROMISES, BRAGGART...
...YOU WON'T BE AROUND TO KEEP
WHOUGH!

YOU FINALLY DECIDE TO FIGHT FOR YOURSELF?
I'D HAVE DONE SO FROM THE START, HAD I BEEN ABLE.

S'YM'S GLAD.
THE LESSON S'YM MEANS TO TEACH YOU IS LONG OVERDUE.
WHEN LAST WE MET, IN BELASCO'S CITADEL, I BURIED MY SOULSWORD IN SYM'S BREAST. HE SHOULD HAVE DIED. I SHOULD HAVE MADE SURE.

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE UNLEASHED THE FULL POWER OF MY MAGICKS...

.. SINCE RETURNING FROM LIMBO. I'D FORGOTTEN HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO USE THEM, HOW EMPTY I AM WHEN I'M NOT.

I BIND S'YM WITH MYSTIC CHAINS.

THEY DON'T HOLD.

HE'S MADDER THAN EVER-- GOOD! I DON'T WANT HIM THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING BUT HIS NEED TO DESTROY ME.

THE TRICK, OF COURSE, WILL BE MAKING SURE...

... HE DOESN'T SUCCEED.

WHEN HE'S BACKED ME INTO A CORNER, AND BELIEVES HIS VICTORY IS CERTAIN...

... I SUMMON MY SOULSWORD.

IT'S PURE ENERGY-- FORGED IN PART FROM THE ESSENCE OF MY VERY BEING--THE ULTIMATE EXPRESSION OF MY POWER AS SORCERESS AND MUTANT.

WITH IT, I NEARLY KILLED BELASCO--BUT I CHOSE TO LET HIM LIVE.

S'YM MAY NOT BE SO LUCKY.

MERCY, DARK-CHILD! S'YM BEGS YOU!

WERE YOU AS GENEROUS WITH THE X-MEN?

S'YM... S'YM IS A DEMON.

AND I AM NOT. THANK YOU FOR REMINDING ME.

YOUR LIFE HAS A PRICE, S'YM.

RENOUNCE BELASCO. SERVE ME AS YOU DID HIM.

A FAIR EXCHANGE. YOU DROVE HIM FROM LIMBO, S'YM DOUBTS HE'LL EVER RETURN. HIS MANTLE IS YOURS BY RIGHT.

WHAT OF THE WOMAN?

SHE HAS SEEN AND HEARD MORE THAN SHE SHOULD. SHALL I DISPOSE OF HER?

BEGONE, MONSTER-- BEFORE I RECONSIDER, AND DECIDE TO AVENGE MY BUTCHERED FRIENDS.

I DON'T UNDER-STAND-- ARE THE X-MEN DEAD?!

IN A WAY. TIME MOVES DIFFERENTLY IN LIMBO-- PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE, ALL GET MUDDLED UP. THERE WERE TWO GROUPS OF X-MEN, DOUBLES OF EVERYONE BUT ME. ONE ESCAPED, THE OTHER... DIDN'T.

ILLYANA, WHAT ARE YOU, WHAT HAVE YOU BECOME?!!

YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO KNOW, STEVIE.

WITH MY WORDS GO A MINOR SPELL...

Bullpen Bulletins

". . . MARVEL'S DARKEST HOUR!"

That's what one guy from Oil City, Pennsylvania, called our recent Assistant Editors' Month. On the other hand, a correspondent from Tulsa, Oklahoma thought that the assistants ". . . should trade jobs with the Editors! They're more imaginative!" No one's been shy about commenting, that's for sure. We've gotten record amounts of mail regarding That Weird Month, and everywhere I go, people mention it to me. An officer at the Manufacturers Hanover Trust, where I have my savings account, walked up to me in the bank the other day and gave me his opinion — he loved it! While I was in Florida visiting the wonderful folks at Adventure International, a computer game designer named John Anderson and the company's founder, Scott Adams, himself (who is to computer gaming what Stan Lee is to comics!) brought it up — two more positive reactions. Letters are still pouring in, and it's too early to render the final verdict, though. Meanwhile, the Assistant Editors are slinking around here like turkeys the week before Thanksgiving.

EVERYONE'S WONDERING . . .

. . . just what *was* it that all the Marvel Editors were doing that kept them away during August, creating the need for Assistant Editors' Month in the first place.

Well, it was strictly business . . . sort of. Here's what we did . . .

Sunday evening, July 31st — We arrived in San Diego, picked up our four Chrysler LeBaron convertibles from Hertz, and checked into the luxurious Executive Hotel.

Monday, August 1st — Brunch in the hotel restaurant. All are present and accounted for: Myself, Tom DeFalco, Denny O'Neil, Larry Hama, Louise Jones, Mark Gruenwald, Ralph Macchio, Bob Budiansky, Carl Potts, Danny Fingeroth, and official photographer Vince Colletta. We plan strategy. At 12:30 p.m. we drive to Night and Day Formal Wear in Fashion Valley to pick up our tuxedos. *Spider-Man* joins us and clowns around trying on jackets and cummerbunds over his Spider-Man suit. Who *is* this guy? At 3:00 p.m. we head for Mission Beach. An unexpected interruption — we're pulled over by two San Diego motorcycle policemen. They want to know why Spider-Man's in town. We talk. They end up cheerfully giving old web-head a ride on one of their motorcycles. On the beach at last, we hold an Official Business Meeting *in the surf* to discuss the upcoming Sub-Mariner Limited Series. It does enhance the mood. Meanwhile Spider-Man is mobbed by civilians on the beach until he finally disappears again. Later, we meet for dinner at La Casa Bandini, a superb Mexican restaurant, in The Old Town.

Tuesday, August 2nd — Brunch again, then clad in our tuxes we motor off to Seaworld. We make our way to the penguin house where, again, *Spider-Man* mysteriously appears. In our penguin-like attire, surrounded by penguins, we meet to discuss the upcoming Iceman Limited Series. Again, the mood is enhanced. Spider-Man, meanwhile, as at the beach, is mobbed. Eventually, to prevent his being literally crushed by admirers, he ducks into a nearby building and vanishes! Who *is* this guy in the webbed suit? That evening, Publishing Vice President Mike Hobson, who's also in town, gathers us up and takes us off to a fantastic meal on the Reuben E. Lee, a riverboat restaurant floating in San Diego Harbor. Mike, a gullible guy, seems to be convinced that our "meetings" thus far are serious business, indeed. But, *is* he really convinced?

Wednesday, August 3rd — Brunch, and then off to the beach at Coronado, where we take lots of photos and Carl Potts teaches us how to body surf. That evening some of us go out to an elegant Italian dinner while the rest chow down at Taco Bell and roar off to a drive-in movie.

Thursday, August 4th — Brunch. Then the San Diego Comicon begins at the San Diego Convention Center. Archie Goodwin and Allen Milgrom, the last of our crew, finally arrive. Now, with *every single Marvel editor* present, we sit en masse at the snazzy Marvel booth in the main room answering questions and reviewing portfolios. Later, Tom DeFalco, Ralph Macchio, and Vince Colletta head for the airfield — we've hired a plane to fly above the city trailing a banner that reads "MARVEL COMICS — THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!" and they're going to oversee the operation. Darned if Spider-Man doesn't turn up there, too, insisting on flying the plane. We've *got* to find out who it is in that costume! We start listing suspects . . . trying to see who *isn't* around whenever "Spider-Man" is. It has to be one of the Marvel artists in attendance pulling a fast one. Joe Rubinstein? Bill Sienkiewicz? Art Adams? Paul Smith?

Friday, August 5th — Another Brunch, then more convention appearances. There's a lot of swimming, jet-skiing, and body surfing going on in between things though. A few editors take the trolley to Tiajuana for a while. That night there's a huge, official Marvel Comics party held in my suite. It expands to take up the *whole fourth floor* of the hotel.

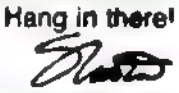
Saturday, August 6th — Another brunch, more convention activities, more quick trips to the beach, more parties.

Sunday, August 7th — The penultimate brunch in San Diego. The convention winds down. We're pretty wound down, too, but "Spider-Man's" identity is secret no longer! Bill Sienkiewicz tips his hand — while wearing the costume, in the hotel lobby, he signs an autograph for a fan in the hotel lobby "Spiedier-Man." Aha!

Monday, August 8th — The last brunch and on to Los Angeles!

I'd love to tell you about that leg of the trip — especially about the incident at Disneyland — but we're out of space. Next month!

Hang in there!



Jim Shooter

THE HYPE BOX

THE GENERIC COMIC — Featuring a super hero and a super villain in an exciting story as only A WRITER and A PENCILER could bring it to you. And with AN INKER doing the inking, you know you're in for a treat! (And if *that* doesn't intrigue you, we don't know what will!) Only from Marvel!

THOR #342 — If you haven't read THOR lately, you haven't read THOR! With WALT SIMONSON at the helm, this is fast becoming Marvel's hottest and most popular series! In this issue, Walt reveals a super power of Thor's we've never seen before. Plus, special guest inker TERRY AUSTIN. Need we say more?

DR. STRANGE #64 — A tale of the weird and the wonderful by ANN NOCENTI and newcomer TONY SALMONS, exploring the age-old question: magic and art, where does one end and the other begin? An intriguing question — one to ponder in the luxury of your home — but the answer becomes a matter of life and death for Dr. Strange as he battles the bizarre creations of a deranged artist's mind! Don't miss "Artrage!"

THE EIGHTY MARVEL CHECKLIST

- ☐ THE THING #10
- ☐ DAREDEVIL #205
- ☐ NEW MUTANTS #14
- ☐ KA-ZAR #31
- ☐ HERCULES #2
- ☐ OFFICIAL HANDBOOK OF THE MARVEL UNIVERSE #15 — The Book of Weapons and Hardware
- ☐ DR. STRANGE SPECIAL EDITION #2 — Re-printing Strange Tales #'s 133-135 by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO
- ☐ AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #251
- ☐ CAPTAIN AMERICA #292
- ☐ THOR #342
- ☐ INDIANA JONES #18
- ☐ DR. STRANGE #64
- ☐ U.S. 1 (Limited Series) #9
- ☐ X-MEN/MICRONAUTS (Limited Series) #4
- ☐ THE GENERIC COMIC #1
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR SPECIAL EDITION #1 — Re-presenting the classic FF Annual #1, by STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY.
- ☐ TARZAN OF THE APES (Limited Series) #1
- ☐ INCREDIBLE HULK #294
- ☐ AVENGERS #242
- ☐ CONAN THE BARBARIAN #167
- ☐ X-MEN #180
- ☐ ROM #53
- ☐ MARVEL TALES #162 — Reprinting "Spider-Man Goes Mad," by STAN LEE and STEVE DITKO, from Amazing Spider-Man #24
- ☐ POWER MAN/IRON FIST #104
- ☐ G.I. JOE #22
- ☐ FANTASTIC FOUR #266
- ☐ MARVEL TEAM-UP #140 — Spider-Man and the Black Widow
- ☐ IRON MAN #181
- ☐ PETER PARKER, THE SPECTACULAR SPIDER-MAN #89
- ☐ DEFENDERS #130
- ☐ STAR WARS #82
- ☐ ALPHA FLIGHT #9
- ☐ JACK OF HEARTS (Limited Series) #4
- ☐ WHAT IF #44 — "What If the Hulk Went Berserk?"
- ☐ ELEKTRA SAGA (Limited Series) #3
- ☐ THE A-TEAM (Limited Series) #2 — Marvel's adaptation of the TV smash!
- ☐ MICRONAUTS SPECIAL EDITION #1 — Concluding the very first Micronauts epic by BILL MANTLO and MICHAEL GOLDEN.

MARVEL MAGAZINES

- ☐ SAVAGE SWORD OF CONAN #88
- ☐ MARVEL AGE #13

EPIC COMICS

- ☐ COYOTE #4

...ON STEVIE'S MEMORIES, SO THAT ALL SHE REMEMBERS IS THAT MY MUTANT POWERS -- MY "LIGHT CIRCLE" TELE-PORTER FIELD -- SAVED THE DAY, BY SENDING SYM BACK TO WHERE HE CAME FROM.

MY SORCERY, FOR NOW, IS A SECRET I'LL SHARE WITH NO ONE.

WOW!

WE THOUGHT OF CLEARING UP THE MESS, BUT DECIDED TO HAVE THE PARTY INSTEAD. ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, WE FIGURED WE DESERVED IT. WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED WHEN, AT LAST, THE X-MEN RETURN HOME.

WHAT'D I TELL YA -- CAN'T LEAVE THESE FLAMIN' KIDS ALONE FOR AN INSTANT!

WHY, WOLVERINE, AM I TO ASSUME THAT YOU DON'T APPROVE...

...OF OUR REDECORATING?

MPZ 527

WHATEVER HAPPENED, AH BET IT'LL MAKE ONE HECKUVA STORY!

TRUE ENOUGH, ROGUE -- AND THE SOONER WE JOIN THE PARTY...

...THE SOONER WE SHALL HEAR IT!

SOUNDS GOOD TO ME, STORM.

HEY, STEVIE, YOU GOT ANYTHING STRONGER'N CIDER? I COULD USE A COLD BREW!

YOU ALL PUT UP A MAGNIFICENT FIGHT AGAINST S'YM, ILLYANA. I'M VERY PROUD.

WE WERE LUCKY.

DOES HE KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED?

SEEING S'YM MUST HAVE BEEN HARD-- A REMINDER OF YOUR EXILE IN LIMBO, OPENING WOUNDS PERHAPS BARELY HEALED.

IF YOU EVER WISH TO TALK ABOUT IT...

MAYBE, PROFESSOR. SOMEDAY.

IN THE MEANTIME, WOULD YOU DO ME THE HONOR...

... OF SHARING THE FIRST WALTZ?

I'M NOT PAYING ATTENTION. WE'RE HALFWAY THROUGH THE DANCE...

... BEFORE I REALIZE WHAT'S HAPPENING.

AND IN THAT SPLENDID INSTANT...

...ALL MY FEARS AND TROUBLES BECOME ABOUT AS TRIVIAL AS CAN BE.

PROFESSOR XAVIER, YOUR LEGS ARE *FULLY RECOVERED!* YOU CAN WALK!

SEE, CHILD-- THERE'S HOPE FOR US ALL.

HE KNOWS!

HOORAY! I WAS SCARED ILLYANA MIGHT NEVER RELAX AND LOOSEN UP-- GOOD FOR YOU, PROFESSOR!

I HOPE IT LASTS-- hmnh?!

HEY, KITTY-- IT'S ME, *DOUG RAMSEY!*

WHAT'RE YOU DOING AT THE WINDOW??

C'MON INSIDE, JERK, BEFORE YOU FREEZE!

YOU'RE HAVING A PARTY, I DIDN'T WANT TO INTRUDE.

FRIENDS ARE ALLOWED, DUMMY!

IS THAT A MOUNTAIN IN YOUR LIVING ROOM???

ASK AMARA, SHE BUILT IT.

NO FOOLIN'?

WOULD I KID ABOUT A THING LIKE THAT?

LOOK, I NEED TO TALK TO YOU, I'VE GOT SOME FANTASTIC NEWS!

I'VE BEEN OFFERED A FULL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP! I'M FLYING UP TO THE SCHOOL FOR THE FINAL INTERVIEW. I'D LIKE YOU TO COME ALONG.

ME, WHY?!

YOU WERE A STUDENT THERE, EVEN IF ONLY FOR A WEEK.

I RESPECT YOUR JUDGEMENT MORE THAN ALMOST ANYONE'S. I FIGURE I COULD USE YOUR ADVICE.

IT'S THE *MASSACHUSETTS ACADEMY.*

Oh, DOUG, *NO!* THAT'S RUN BY THE X-MEN'S DEADLIEST ENEMIES, THE *HELLFIRE CLUB?*

BUT HOW CAN I TELL HIM?! WHAT AM I GOING TO DO?!?

FOR THE ANSWER, SEE X-MEN #180, ON SALE IN TWO WEEKS!

FOR THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ANSWER, BE HERE NEXT MONTH TO READ--

SCAREDY CAT!

MINUTEMEN
Quick
STOP
RST